

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 193706
ORIGIN ARA-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-05 ISO-00 /009 R

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DRAFTED BY ARA:JOHN F. KEANE:JLP

APPROVED BY ARA:JOHN F. KEANE

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O 160101Z AUG 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 193706

LIMDIS - FOR ASST. SECRETARY TODMAN FROM KEANE

FOL RPT MEXICO 13530 ACTION SECSTATE 12 AUG 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 13530

LIMDIS

FROM COUNSELOR NIMETZ FOR CHRISTOPHER, TODMAN AND COOPER

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MX, US

SUBJECT: ROEL VIEWS ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS AND U.S.-
MEXICAN RELATIONS

FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL INVITED ME TO HIS HOME, AFTER
THE SOCIAL WORKING GROUP MEETING HAD CONCLUDED, FOR AN
HOUR AND A HALF PRIVATE MEETING. HIS MAIN THEME WAS
DEEP CONCERN FOR THE U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONSHIP IN LIGHT
OF OUR ANNOUNCED UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN PROGRAM. HE MADE
THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1) UNDER PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO AND FONSEC ROEL AN
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ATTEMPT WAS BEING MADE TO STRENGTHEN THE U.S. RELATION-
SHIP AND REVERSE THE UNFORTUNATE TREND DURING
MEXICO'S PRIOR ADMINISTRATION. HE REFERRED TO THE
EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE TWO PRESI-
DENTS AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND
AMBASSADOR LUCEY.

2) THIS POSITIVE POLICY WAS REFLECTED IN MEXICO'S SUPPORTIVE EFFORTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA AND IN ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.

3) MEXICO HAD ALSO BEEN EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE WITH RESPECT TO OUR PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AT THE RECENT BOGOTA MEETING. (I THANKED HIM FOR HIS HELP.)

4) MEXICO'S NARCOTICS INTERDICTION AND ERADICATION PROGRAM WAS A BURDEN BUT WAS PROVING VERY SUCCESSFUL.

5) IN OTHER AREAS TOO, SUCH AS FAMILY PLANNING, MEXICO WAS BEING COOPERATIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING.

6) HOWEVER, MEXICO HAS ALWAYS HAD A STRONG NATIONALISTIC ELEMENT IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY, AND NO ADMINISTRATION CAN BE SEEN AS ACCEPTING U.S. DOMINATION. CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES MAKE THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS ESPECIALLY SEVERE. UNFAVORABLE U.S. PRESS REPORTS WERE PARTICULARLY ANNOYING.

7) THE UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN ISSUE IS A DEEP-SEATED PROBLEM CAUSED BY YEARS OF INACTION, INCLUDING POPULATION PROBLEMS IN MEXICO, ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION BY U.S. EMPLOYERS. IT CANNOT BE SOLVED OVERNIGHT, ALTHOUGH THIS MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IS WORKING VERY HARD TO BEGIN OR EXPAND POSITIVE PROGRAMS.
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8) THE NEW U.S. PROGRAM, IF IMPLEMENTED HARSHLY, CAN HAVE AN EXTREMELY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT. THE GREATEST FEAR OF THE GOM IS THAT THE LAW-ENFORCEMENT ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM (INCREASED BORDER ENFORCEMENT, EMPLOYER SANCTIONS) WILL MOVE FORWARD, WHILE THE HUMANITARIAN ELEMENTS (ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS, INCREASED LEGAL IMMIGRATION AND WORK PROGRAMS, AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE) WILL NOT BE APPROVED BY THE CONGRESS, OR WILL BE IMPLEMENTED SLOWLY AND IN A NIGGARDLY MANNER.

9) THE PRESSURE ON THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BECOME ENORMOUS--POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY--AND ALREADY LABOR AND AGRICULTURAL GROUPS AND BORDER GOVERNORS ARE ACCUSING ROEL OF NOT BEING TOUGH ENOUGH.

10) WHAT IS NEEDED IS TIME--THROUGH REASONABLE AND HUMANE IMPLEMENTATION--AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

11) WITH RESPECT TO THE LATTER, ROEL INDICATED THAT THROUGH THE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM HE WOULD BE APPROACHING THE USG WITH MEXICO'S NEEDS, NOTING PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT

TO HELP AFFECTED SOURCE NATIONS IN HIS AUGUST 4 STATEMENT.

12) ROEL WONDERED WHETHER HE SHOULD COME TO WASHINGTON TO LOBBY THE CONGRESS PERSONALLY. (I SAID I WOULD GIVE HIM OUR VIEWS ON THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AFTER CONSULTING OUR LEGISLATIVE EXPERTS.)

IN GENERAL, I TRIED TO REASSURE ROEL, EMPHASIZING OUR APPRECIATION OF HIS EFFORTS AND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN PROBLEM ON MEXICO. THESE ARE PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED JOINTLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY, AND WE HAVE MADE A GOOD START. I ASSURED HIM THAT MEXICO, AND HE PERSONALLY, ARE HIGHLY REGARDED IN WASHINGTON AND URGED HIM TO IGNORE DAY-TO-DAY
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PRESS REPORTS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO WORK TOGETHER TO AMELIORATE THE EFFECTS OF THE UNDOCUMENTED WORKER PROGRAM SO THAT IT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE BASIC RELATIONSHIP. WE HAVE MADE A GOOD START, I CONCLUDED, AND THROUGH CLOSE CONSULTATIONS, COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC

ACTIVITIES AND OTHER POLITICALLY ATTRACTIVE STEPS WE CAN SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM, OR AT LEAST REDUCE ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT. LUCEY
UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MIGRATORY WORKERS, ALIENS, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE193706
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JOHN F. KEANE:JLP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770294-0530
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770857/aaaabvyd.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3dd0f759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1587626
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROEL VIEWS ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS AND U.S.- MEXICAN RELATIONS FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL INVITED ME TO HIS HOME, AFT
TAGS: PGOV, ELAB, PBOR, MX, US, (ROEL GARCIA, SANTIAGO)
To: ASUNCION
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3dd0f759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009